

The Agony of Modernization: Labor and Industrialization in Spain. By Benjamin Martin. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1990. Pp. xvii, 576. \$42.00.

The Spanish civil war has received considerable attention from European and American scholars alike, and this book is in large part yet another contribution. The title suggests, however, a departure from many previous works, as instead of discussing the war within a scenario of "inefficient" industry or "feudal" agriculture, the emphasis would seem to be on the inability of social and political organizations to adapt to a growing economy and the structural changes that successful industrialization implies. Thus the longer-term vision of Spain's tragic civil war (1936 to 1939) could be seen in a light similar to Britain's problems in the post-Napoleonic era or to France's in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This interesting though not new line is not followed by Benjamin Martin; what we are given instead is a traditional blow-by-blow account of the labor movement imposing its authority on an unevenly undemocratic state from the mid-nineteenth century until 1931. The sudden burst of true political democracy that appeared during the Republic (1931 to 1936) was then squandered, as inexperienced politicians were totally incapable of dealing with either the radical labor movements or the reactionary attempts to halt democratic reform.

This book will disappoint most economic historians, as only rarely are economic questions examined. Indeed, if it were not for the importance of rural migration to the major cities, which changed the face of trade union membership, the reader might be forgiven for wondering whether the "agony of modernization" even had an economic side. Perhaps more seriously, when economic issues are mentioned they often confuse as much as enlighten. The reader is left with the impression of an "inefficient and semi-feudal system of agriculture" (p. 4) accompanied by an industrial base that grew periodically, driven by the cyclical booms of the international economy or by accidents of domestic policies (neutrality during World War I or the "unorthodox fiscal policies" and "pork-barrel ventures" of Primo de Rivera [pp. 177, 275]). If Spain really did develop as much as it had done by 1931 on the basis of those policies, the inexperienced politicians surely could have solved their social and political problems as well! Although much remains to be done, and debates naturally abound, Spanish economic history has advanced considerably further in the past decade than the author seems to realize.

In the preface he identifies a considerably less ambitious goal for his work than that implied in the title, suggesting instead a "general account and analysis incorporating the substantial monographic research of recent date" related to labor developments and working-class organization. In this Martin is more successful; he has written a balanced account of changes in trade union policies and their relationship with the political

establishment, no mean task given the complexity of the Spanish labor movements during this period. The study tends to center on events in Barcelona and Madrid rather than in the Basque region or Andalusia, but this may be justified, given the wider political implications that events in those two cities had for the labor movement. However, as a “general account” the book has two faults. One is its excessive detail on individual strikes or interunion rivalry and the lack of a wider perspective on the development of labor movements in Spain. More comparisons with labor movements in other countries at that time would have helped the reader. Second, for those whose knowledge of Spain and its history is not good, the absence of maps and a glossary to remind readers of the differences between the UFNR, UGT, UP, USC, USO (and a very long etcetera) is a shortcoming.

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